**Getting Started in your Community-Relationships are Key to Success**

How does one begin AVP in their location? There are multiple approaches but no matter what approach one takes, the proven key to a successful start of a local AVP program is

* Finding and developing AVP relationships!
* Knowing who you want to serve in your community or prison
* Having a sense of where you want to build your group.

There are countless examples from around the world of how individuals have started AVP groups by organizing them through their own local Quaker Meeting, church or other faith community, employer, public or private, non-profit organizations.

However one builds their initial AVP relationships, there are a variety of ways that a local AVP group can get started. For example, someone may have just heard of the Alternatives to Violence Project, but has no training and wants to experience a workshop, then decide if s/he wants to become a facilitator. This person may have met a facilitator or goes to the AVP website to identify a facilitator and invites that facilitator to conduct the basic workshop. This can be done through ones Quaker Meeting, church or other faith community, employer, public or private, non-profit organizations.

If you don’t, directly, know any AVP facilitators that could come to you, One can go the AVP website to locate existing AVP groups, that are close to you and then take the basic workshop, advanced and training for facilitators with them. After training, you can, then invite facilitators from that locale to join you in your locale to assist in training and mentoring your own first generation of facilitators!

Examples of these are; in Romania, a psychologist was introduced to AVP by Hungarian friends who happened to be AVP facilitators. They offered to come to Romania and conduct workshops. This led to the psychologist developing an organization, which is now conducting AVP workshops in Romania.

Another example is an AVP facilitator living and working in the Cayman Islands had her own previous AVP training but needed help in developing AVP on the Island. She made contact with lead facilitators she had met by attending a National Gathering in the United States. Her government department secured a grant and was able to bring in a facilitating team to work with her, starting from scratch, to train 40 individuals within six Cayman Islands social service departments.

2.

**Helpful AVP Websites:**

[**www.avpusa.org**](http://www.avpusa.org)**,**

[**www.avpinternational.org**](http://www.avpinternational.org)

Please refer to AVP/USA Organizing Kit: [**AVP USA Organizing Kit 2010**](https://avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com/AVP+USA+Organizing+Kit+2010)Chapter One, Appendix, [**www.avpusa.org**](http://www.avpusa.org)**,** [**www.avpinternational.org**](http://www.avpinternational.org). [**www.avpusa.org**](http://www.avpusa.org)**,** [**www.avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com**](http://www.avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com)

These websites have numerous documents and links that can add guidance related to the details of establishing a local AVP group, including a organizational structure. These resources should be relied upon as a basis for addressing issues related to developing an local AVP group.

Helpful AVP Organizing Material:

[**AVP USA Organizing Kit 2010**](https://avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com/AVP+USA+Organizing+Kit+2010)

British Organizing Kit

Australian Organizing Material

**Developing a Facilitator Corps**

After participants have completed the basic, advanced and training for

facilitators workshops, apprenticing of these newly trained facilitators is essential. It is through apprenticing that facilitators gain confidence and skills in conducting workshops.

**Becoming Lead Facilitators**

Lead facilitators and the apprentices determine when a facilitator can become a lead facilitator. The decision to become a lead facilitator is jointly made between existing, lead facilitators and the apprentice. There should be open, honest discussions and clinics that can point our strengths and weaknesses or areas that needed development.

To aid in the determination, noted below, 2 questionnaires found in the UK Organizing Handbook, pg. 51 at [AVP Britain Regional Handbook 2010](https://avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com/AVP+Britain+Regional+Handbook+2010), may be of help: Self-Assessment Interview before attending Lead Facilitator Training, Self-Assessment Questionnaire for those wanting to become AVP Facilitators. Your facilitator base is comprised of committed, utilized and confident facilitators. These facilitators will thrive if there are regularly, scheduled meetings where facilitators get to know each other, practice skills and learn new ways to conduct workshops, organized and plan future workshops, etc.

3.

**Mentorship**

One tool that has been used to help develop a facilitator corps is the use of mentors. A lead facilitator can guide newly trained facilitators and provide a sense of security and on-going feedback so that the facilitator can gain confidence in facilitation. This personal relationship can be conducive in developing qualities that are essential in a facilitator: honesty, receptivity to critique, cooperation, assertiveness and team-building.

Responsibility-sharing in organizing workshops, such advertising, maintaining contact with prospective participants, identifying and setting up of venues, provision of materials, such as certificates of completing, basic manuals for practice session for the training of facilitators level of workshop, awarding of basic manuals for graduated participants, determining ways to cover costs associated with a workshop, etc. Given the variability in facilitators’ lives, some facilitators may simply want to be facilitators and not engage with the official duties of the AVP Group.

**Registry of facilitators**

It is recommended that AVP groups develop a registry of facilitators in their programs. The following may be included,

a. Name of facilitator

b. Home address, email address

c. Phone number(s)

d. Date of completion of Training

e. Level of accomplishment, i.e. apprentice or lead facilitator

f.  Interest in community and/or prison workshops

This registry should be used internally by the AVP program, rather than making identities of facilitators know publically. It is recommended that this registry be protected and used by the organization in a way that protects the identity of the facilitators and any member of the group. It is important to have accurate, realistic and current records in order to inform the AVP program and outside AVP groups of the actual situation that exists with a particular AVP program.

**Workshops & Programs In Different Settings**

One unique aspect of the Alternatives to Violence Project is that it is adaptable to different settings and in most cultures, sub-cultures, societies, countries, special situations.

4.

1.Community

2. Prison

3. Youth

4. Developing Countries

4. International NGOs

5. Refugee camps

6. Others

Please refer to AVP/USA Organizing Kit: [**AVP USA Organizing Kit 2010**](https://avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com/AVP+USA+Organizing+Kit+2010)Chapter One, Appendix, [**www.avpusa.org**](http://www.avpusa.org)**,** [**www.avpinternational.org**](http://www.avpinternational.org). [**www.avpusa.org**](http://www.avpusa.org)**,** [**www.avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com**](http://www.avpclearinghouse.wikispaces.com)

These websites have references that will give AVP programs guidance in conducting workshops in the above settings, and others. General comments follow.

**Community Workshops**

A good place to start your program is by offering a community Basic AVP Workshop. This workshop can be offered to local organizations, churches, Quaker Meetings, the general public. There are specific steps that can be taken. A goal of a community workshop is to establish a corps of facilitators in your program. Although many participants in a basic workshop many not wish to become facilitators, generating a group of facilitators will help sustain an AVP Program over time.

These workshops pose special challenges for the local AVP Program, depending on the size and diversity of the community. Solutions can be sought by having regional and national AVP Program gatherings and other types of conferences. Networking in this way can prove indispensable to sustaining local AVP Programs.

There are also documents, contact information and other sources of guidance that can be found in the AVP/USA website as well as the AVP International website.

**Prisons**

Although prison AVP programs are not as common internationally, as are community or other special community settings, these programs should be attempted, internationally.

The Alternatives to Violence Project started in the Greenhaven maximum security prison in New York State in 1975. Prison workshops hold a special and enduring place in the heart of AVP. Facilitators in the AVP community can begin

5.

training prisoners in these life-changing workshops. The AVP/USA and the International AVP websites describe the history and impact the prison workshop have had for prisoners. There are well-established procedures that are described in existing websites and dedicated documents.

The prison systems in different countries pose unique challenges. Locally trained facilitators are the logical people to approach prisons and other types of law enforcement, because of their attachment to the local community, the nuances of the settings, timing, etc.

For example, locally trained facilitators in the Palestinian Territory of the West Bank approached local prison and law enforcement personnel, including social workers, counselors, psychologists, nurses, etc., about providing AVP workshops. The AVP Program in the West Bank was established and had adequate history to make the program credible.

Prison workshops are coordinated and conducted by “inside” facilitators, who were trained by “outside” or local community facilitator who introduced AVP to the prison originally. History has shown that a prison facilitator corps is achievable, giving “ownership” to the prisoners. Prison administrators hope to see a reduction of the violence that is endemic prisons.

Success of prison programs is more likely to happen if the prisoners have long prison sentences. Therefore, developing AVP Programs in prisons that house prisoners for long periods of time, should be the goal of the prison AVP Program.

Here is a link for a summary of and references to prison effectiveness studies,

http://www.avpav.org/files/res-avp-rpteval-delahanty-2003.pdf

**Youth**

This special population is significant in that it helps the participant develop

non-violent ways to resolve conflicts during an emotional and tumultuous era of the person’s development. These workshops can be offered in youth detention facilitators, schools, youth community programs.

Developing countries particular emphasis youth services in order to inspire hope for the future. The Alternatives to Violence Project has developed an Alternatives to Violence Project Youth Manual that can be used by these youth programs.

**6.**

**Developing Countries**

The Alternatives to Violence Project is a worldwide program that is adaptable to most developing countries. The manuals have been translated into such languages as Spanish and Arabic.

AVP facilitators can become interested in reaching out to developing countries which show a need for the Alternatives to Violence Project. A popular model involves identifying prospective sponsors or interested organizations in a particular country. Different forms of communication, such as email, skype, texting can be used to develop relationships and to arrange visits.

In the Palestine Territories, an AVP facilitator spent time in the Jerusalem area to study women’s rights. While there, she made contacts with local organizations and individuals who might be interested in the Alternatives to Violence Project. Some interest developed and this facilitator with another facilitator who she invited began with basic workshops.

Eventually, the demand developed to the extent that more help was needed. This facilitator put out a call on the AVP International website requesting AVP facilitators to join her in providing workshops. Since that time, AVP in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel has developed and is functioning.

This is one model that can work. Again, the AVP International website provides information on the status of programs in the developing countries. The genius of the Alternatives to Violence Project lies in the creativity, vision and dedication of the work which have developed examples of how workshops can begin and become sustainable in developing countries.

Another model relies on the expertise of Friends Peace Teams FPT), which are known for their ability to establish long-term relationships with countries who can use help in addressing institutional and individual violence. A primary goal of FPT is to help establish the Alternatives to Violence Project in countries that have experienced war, state sponsored violence, domestic violence, tribal violence and other forms of violence.

**International Non-Governmental Organizations**

Developing and developed countries rely on Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) as a tool to deliver needed services to affected populations. These organizations provided a variety of social, psychological, youth, medical, housing and other services to the population. Identifying and developing mutual relationships with these organizations is a key to providing and sustaining the Alternatives to Violence Project. AVP is relatively cost effective for most established organizations that have secure funding from various sources.

7.

For example, in the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as in Israel, the visiting AVP facilitator team, developed a strategic plan that called identifying well-established organizations that may use AVP as part of

its services. Additionally, these organizations can then offer these workshops to other organizations, which can provide AVP to populations which they serve. This process is replicated resulting in a multiplying effect that spread AVP in the country/region, etc.

Although the goal is to help the organizations become autonomous, the visiting AVP team, as well as other AVP groups worldwide, can remain connected with the organization to help them form a consortium or inter-organizational body that can serve as the AVP program in that country or region.

This is another model that can be used for developing and developed countries in the world. Again, the AVP/USA Organizing Kit and website, as well as the AVP International website offer a wide variety of resources, manuals, publications, that can inform the development of AVP Programs internationally.

**Refugees**

The emergence of refugee camps around the world offer shelter and services that can address the consequences of war, famine, disease and other national disruptions in a society. Refugee camps of pose a challenge in that they can foment frustration and violence that can affect the conditions in these camps.

The Alternatives to Violence Project has been invited into and has conducted workshops aimed at reducing the incidence of violence, but also inspire nonviolence responses to violence and threats of violence.

In 2000, AVP workshops were offered in refugee camps in Hungary after the Bosnian War (1992-95). AVP workshops have been offered in various refugee camps in the war-torn Middle East by AVP facilitators and AVP-trained organizations.

**Others**

AVP programs can be established in other settings not noted above. Noted above are commonly-used settings. The individual AVP program can deide where AVP can be offered locally and worldwide.

8.

This section of the Organizing Guide offers ideas and concepts that will inform the development of AVP Programs around the world. How these ideas and concepts will be used and developed depends on the organizers. The multiple organizing guides and documents that are available in the AVP/USA Organizing Kit, the UK Volunteer Manual, the AVP/USA website, the AVP International Manual and AVP International Clearance, are available to help local groups develop their programs domestically and internationally. So will participation in the AVP Regional, National and International Gatherings that are regularly scheduled.